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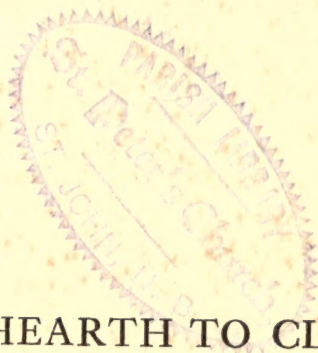


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FROM  
HEARTH TO CLOISTER  
IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

A NARRATIVE OF SIR JOHN AND LADY  
WARNER'S SO-MUCH-WONDERED-AT RESO-  
LUTIONS TO LEAVE THE ANGLICAN CHURCH  
AND TO ENTER THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

BY

FRANCES JACKSON



"Wherefore I most humbly beg you, upon my  
knees, to give me leave to offer unto you the sole  
motives of our so-much-wonder'd-at resolutions."

*Letter of* LADY WARNER to her FATHER

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED  
NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO: BENZIGER BROTHERS

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1902







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## Introduction.

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THE Life of Lady Warner was first published in 1690, twenty years after her death in the Convent of the Poor Clares at Gravelines, yet within the lifetime of her husband, as is evident from a remark in the preface to the second edition, 1692, where Sir John Warner is spoken of as one "who is yet living." It was published anonymously "By a Catholic Gentleman,"\* with a courtly dedication to "the Queen" (Mary d'Este of Modena). This Life, remarkable in many ways, shows incidentally the divergence of belief which existed within the Church of England as far back as the reign of Charles II.

It was during a visit to her father, Sir Thomas Hanmer, and in conversation with her

\* The Rev. E. Scarisbrick, S.J.

“mother-in-law” (or, as we now say, her step-mother), that Lady Warner was first led to entertain doubts concerning her religion.

“One night, after supper, it happened that my Lady Hanmer, in a discourse about religion, affirmed ‘that the belief of the Real Presence of our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament was acknowledged by the public Liturgy of the Church of England, which was authorized and commanded to be read in all churches of the kingdom.’ My Lady Warner, surprised at this assertion, modestly replied, ‘Then, madam, I have hitherto been very ignorant in the religion I profess, and have been brought up in from a child!’ My lady persisted still in her assertion, and admired her ignorance in so considerable a point of faith ; and Sir Thomas Hanmer affirming my lady to be in the right and his daughter to be in an error, she was extremely perplexed to think she had been so long brought up in the belief of that tenet, which the Church she professed herself of disowned.”

The story of her conversion, and that of her husband, of the interviews with Dr. Buck, the Anglican Chaplain of Charles II., with Dr. Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, and



Dr. Dolbin, Dean of Westminster, cannot fail to be of interest to the general reader at the present time, however familiar it may be to the student of history.

The work also shows the position of Catholics in England during the closing years of the Protector's life and the years immediately following the Restoration, when the penal laws would seem to have been in abeyance. Many of the Jesuit Fathers are mentioned by name, and they pass before our eyes in these pages with little more attempt at disguise than would be assumed by any distinguished personage who desired to travel incognito.

Although by law to harbour a priest was punishable by death, and to be reconciled to the Church of Rome was treason, we find a Protestant girl, with the full consent of her father, enquiring among her Catholic acquaintances for a priest to direct her to some convent where she could be received; and years afterwards, when Trevor Hanmer had become Lady Warner, we find the same Jesuit Father who had then been recommended to her asking leave to call on her in London, congratulating

her on her happy marriage, and, undeterred by the presence of another Protestant lady, pressing upon her the claims of the Catholic Church, as frankly as a zealous priest of our own day might do to a lady whom he found to be interested in religious questions, and whom he knew to have been once upon the point of becoming a Catholic.

To what extent Sir John and Lady Warner were able openly to profess and practise their religion in this country during the few months that elapsed between their reception into the Catholic Church and their retirement from the world we are not told ; but we know that Lady Warner endeavoured to draw as many of her servants and neighbours as she could to make themselves as happy as she herself was by embracing the same faith ; while the fact of Sir John Warner's conversion, and his resolve to enter a religious community was known, not only to the members of his own and of his wife's family, but—as we shall see—to King Charles II. Evidently he ran no risk with regard to life or property by remaining in this country, but, on the contrary, ran considerable risk by absenting

himself, inasmuch as twice he was obliged to return to the world to protect his estates, on the last occasion being welcomed by his friends and neighbours with "ringing of the bells."

Moreover, we have been accustomed to look upon the reign of Charles II. as one of the worst periods of English history, in so far as the moral tone of the court and aristocracy is concerned. Yet here we have presented to us a group of persons (both Catholic and Protestant) whose lives are without reproach, while the author gravely records his opinion that "for the most part sanctity of life has been attended by nobility of birth and good education." It is possible, indeed, that he may have purposely omitted some of the darker touches from his picture, in order to render the work more fitted for devotional reading, but this in no way deprives it of historical value. "True knowledge of any thing or creature," as Ruskin has well said, "is only of the good of it; its nature and life are in that."\*

In the opening sentence (to which we have already referred) the author observes :

\* "Pleasures of Learning (Pleasures of England)."

“Although virtue stands in no need of additional lustre, yet . . . for the most part sanctity of life has been attended by nobility of birth and good education. The Lady Warner had no small advantages in this kind.”

Unquestionably the Lady Warner would have been sufficiently remarkable on account of her earnestness of character in whatever position of life she had been placed. The keynote of her life is her desire to be a nun. That a Catholic girl, amid Catholic surroundings, should have had such a desire would be no matter of surprise : but here is a Protestant girl who conceives such a desire at the early age of ten, and, notwithstanding repeated discouragements, retains it through life ; striving indeed, not altogether successfully, to lay it aside during the four years following her marriage, but resuming it “with tears of joy” as soon as the way again became clear for her to follow her vocation.

Nor is the character of Sir John less admirable than that of his wife, but, on the contrary, stands out in this memoir in even greater beauty, possibly owing to the fact that the author



(hesitating to praise one who was yet living) has told the story of his life more simply.

It may seem strange to speak of an ideal marriage in such a case as this ; yet seldom has there been a truer, purer, deeper affection than subsisted between these two young people, who so early separated to become, the one a nun, and the other a Jesuit priest. We are not called upon to express approval or disapproval of the step they then took ; it is enough that they took it in the sincere conviction that by thus depriving themselves of temporal enjoyments they made "one another a present of eternal ones."

Nor did their care for each other's true happiness end when they entered their respective monasteries, but as long as Lady Warner lived, Sir John continued to watch over her from his place of retirement, consulting her on all matters affecting the welfare of the children, advising her as to the choice of a convent, insisting on a personal interview with her before she left Liège, and again before they took their vows, in order that she might feel quite sure that she was free to return with him

to the world if she wished it ; and absolutely refusing to allow her to enter an Order in which he would be unable to hear of her welfare.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to reproduce the clear, but somewhat prolix, narrative of the contemporary biographer as faithfully as I could, while greatly condensing it ; “having,” in the words of the *Author's Preface to the Courteous Reader*:

“No other design in this Treatise, than that of giving him as true a knowledge, and as perfect an idea of the admirable life of this Lady as I was able to procure ; . . . hoping he will think that worth his reading, which I took so much content in writing, and this Lady pains in practising.”

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## PART I.

### Early Life and Marriage.

TREVOR HANMER (afterwards Lady Warner) was the only daughter of Sir Thomas Hanmer, and was born in 1636 at Hanmer Hall, her father's country seat in Flintshire. Her mother had been maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria, and her father was cup-bearer and a faithful adherent to Charles I.

During the civil wars he exerted himself to the utmost in his master's cause, but after the imprisonment of the king, finding that he was powerless to render him further service, while he himself was daily exposed to the "danger of imprisonment and other inconveniences incidental to those times," he withdrew to France, taking with him his wife and little daughter, then about ten years old ; his son

appears to have been sent to study at the English Seminary at Lisbon, where he became a Catholic.

Arrived in Paris, Lady Hanmer fell dangerously ill, and her daughter was left to the companionship of a Catholic boy and girl of her own age, the children of the people with whom they lodged. These children showed her how to adorn little oratories, and told her stories of the happy life led by nuns, till Trevor longed to be a nun, and begged her companions to take her with them to the Convent of Mont-Martyr (Montmartre), outside the town, where, in her childish inexperience, she imagined she had only to present herself to be at once received. She made a bundle of her clothes and other things belonging to her, but not having put it together very securely, some of the contents fell out upon the floor as she was passing through the house ; “so her plot was discovered, and her design blown up, and all the reward she received for her intended devotion was a severe correction from my lady her mother, though then detained in bed by her last sickness.”



After the death of his wife, Sir Thomas Hanmer returned privately to England to see if he could be of any further use to the king, leaving his daughter at Paris under the care of "an ancient burgher and his wife who had no children, and were Huguenots," with whom, therefore, he hoped that she would be safe from making further attempts of this kind. The child, by her sweet disposition, soon won the hearts of the two old people, and when more than a year had elapsed without any news of her father, they began to think he was dead, and looked upon it as a happy dispensation of Providence with regard to themselves, that they should thus have had given to them an heiress, who was as dear to them as their own child. But while they thus congratulated themselves, Sir Thomas (who was not dead, but married) "returned, and dashed all their hopes," and as a proof of his affection came expressly himself to fetch his daughter to England.

Arrived there, he gave her her choice whether to go with him to her step-mother in Suffolk or to live with her grandmother,

the dowager Lady Hanmer, at Haughton, in Flintshire, and she chose the latter. Here, however, her former desires returned, and the old lady, discovering that her grandchild was planning to be a nun, wrote in alarm to her father, who thereupon summoned her home. She was "received with all imaginable kindness by my lady her mother-in-law"; and it now seems to have occurred to her that, though prevented from actually entering a convent, she might in some measure lead the life of a nun at home. She therefore begged her father (whose once plentiful estate had been greatly reduced by sequestration and other inconveniences during the civil wars) not to put himself to the expense of giving her a servant, intending in this way to inure herself to the exercise of such labours as she might afterwards be required to practise as a nun. Sir Thomas consented, and here we have a curious glimpse of the domestic arrangements of those times, when each servant was assigned to some individual master or mistress, and not only waited on them, but took entire charge of their rooms. Thus, having declined the services

of a maid, it fell to Trevor's lot to "rub" the floor of her room.

"One day whilst she was busied in rubbing her chamber, her father suddenly came in upon her, and finding her upon her knees all in a sweat, he took her up in his arms, embraced her, with tears in his eyes, telling her: God would one day give her a particular blessing for conforming herself in so particular a manner to those circumstances His Providence and her kindness to himself had reduced her."

The troubles still continuing, Sir Thomas, unwilling to trespass longer on the hospitality of his father-in-law (Sir Thomas Harvey, with whom he had lived since his marriage), removed for a time to his mother's house in Wales, but returned shortly afterwards (in response to a pressing invitation), leaving his daughter behind, once more under the care of her grandmother. Here she continued her life of preparation for a convent.

"She began to fast once a week, abstaining from meat and drink till night; she rose constantly at midnight to her prayers, and exercised such labours and humble offices as were only fit for

her servant, upon pretext she found them beneficial to her health. She had her time hourly regulated from morning till night, a method she began to practise while she was in France, and never after omitted. . . . She was so industrious in whatever she undertook that she never failed to accomplish it, and by her ingenuity not only learned the French tongue" (very thoroughly, as it afterwards appears) "while she was at Paris, but without the help of any master acquired such a sufficient knowledge of the Italian and Spanish tongues as to understand any book. . . . She was well-read in history, that being her chief delight."

In following this narrative we are struck not only by the high degree of culture to which this young girl attained without any of the modern incentives to study, and actuated solely by a sense of duty and interest in the subject she had chosen—but also by the great liberty of action that was allowed her, without which such a rule of life could not have been followed. It is possible, indeed, that her habit of rising at midnight for prayer may have been kept secret, but this could not have been the case with regard to her strict fast, her menial tasks, and fixed hours of study. Yet we do not read



of the slightest remonstrance on the part of her grandmother, her father, or her step-mother. We can only conclude that the traditions of the Catholic Church still lived in these English (or perhaps we may rather say Welsh) families ; that fasting, mortification, and the right employment of time were still recognised as duties and respected accordingly. Moreover, these old English country houses were large, and the various members of the family lived for the most part in their separate apartments, each waited upon by their own servant, meeting together for meals and recreation much as the members of a religious community might do, but not needlessly interfering with each other's occupations, or wearying one another by their constant presence and trifling conversation. Few people in these days sufficiently recognise the importance of silence and solitude to intellectual and moral training. The true value of a university education, Emerson tells us, consists of a private room and a fire, which a man is willing to provide for his son at college, but not at home.

The quiet, studious life at Haughton was

interrupted by a letter from Sir Thomas Hanmer, asking his daughter to join him in London, as he had taken a house at Leusham (Lewisham), and intended shortly to remove thither with his family. On her arrival, finding her father alone, her step-mother not having yet left Suffolk, Trevor took the opportunity to ask permission to carry out her long cherished project. She represented that there was no probability of better times in England (Cromwell having banished the Cavaliers as well as sequestrated their estates), but rather that they should grow worse, and her father be less able to provide for her than now; that if any misfortune should happen to him it would greatly add to his grief to think that she would suffer; and since her inclinations were wholly fixed on being a nun, she begged him to give her leave to go beyond-sea, and also to give her a sufficient sum for her maintenance in some monastery, where she might both live safely and die happily. Having obtained her father's consent, she applied, as we have seen, to her Catholic friends to help her, and was by them recommended to Fr. Hanmer, S.J., who appears

to have been a cousin of her own, but much older in years, and of whom she and her brother afterwards speak as "Uncle Hanmer."\* This Jesuit Father took to heart her concern, advised her to enter a Benedictine monastery at Paris, gave her the Rule of St. Benedict to study, told her the sum required for her dowry (which Sir Thomas consented to give), and undertook to conduct her thither; the very day being appointed for them to begin their journey.

"The hopes this young lady had conceived of consecrating herself to God in a religious family were, however, nipped in the very bud. For the night before she was to set out from London, my Lady Hanmer, her mother-in-law, came thither, and being informed that Sir Thomas had given his consent for his daughter's going beyond-sea to be a nun, used such moving arguments to persuade him to recal his consent, as had their effect."

It must be owned that, looking upon the matter from the point of view of a Protestant and

\* "A title the Welsh give to such as are cousins only when they much exceed them in age." Fr. Hanmer was professed in 1633 (three years before Lady Warner was born). He died in 1666. See note to ed. 1858.

a woman of the world, there was some reason in her objections. She told him that everyone would regard it as a proof of her unkindness as a stepmother if he could do no better for his only daughter than "imprison her" in a monastery; and further, it would give rise to a suspicion that he himself was a papist, and so they would be liable to persecution for their religion, as they already were for their loyalty.

Sir Thomas reversed all his former promises, and Trevor received his commands with submission, yet with no ordinary sorrow.

"As cheerfully as she could, she accompanied her father and my lady to Leusham, where for a year she continued much the same kind of life she had led at Haughton, at the end of which her father, leaving Leusham, sent her to live with a relative (Mrs. Ellis) at Halrhey in Wales."

Her next attempt is a somewhat remarkable one. She embarks in trade, "showing hereby," says her biographer, "her humility to submit to so base and sordid a means to attain so glorious an end."

Trevor received a yearly allowance from her



father, which, though as much as he could afford, was not enough to maintain her according to her position. She, therefore, asked leave to buy barley that she might get it made into malt, and sell it to her father's tenants, hoping that soon, by good housewifery, she might be able to make a sufficient sum for her admission into a convent. Her father consented, on condition that she sold only to the tenants, but the project failed, the tenants in those troublesome times becoming so poor that they could not pay for what they had bought from her.

"Hoping even against hope," Trevor resolved at least never to marry. The times having grown a little better, her father received several good offers of marriage for her, but she begged him to show his affection by not pressing her to embrace that course of life to which she had a greater aversion than to anything in the world. Her father for a time desisted from his importunity, but a certain baronet, one of her suitors, did not from his, to avoid which (with her father's consent) she left Halrhey accompanied by her cousin and intimate friend, Miss Katherine Kinnaston, and went to reside with

a family at Brainford, near London. Hither the baronet followed her, armed with a letter from her father, and made a last appeal, "very pathetically expressing his passion for her." Trevor, greatly disturbed, sought counsel of her cousin, who urged her to accept the offer. She accordingly wrote him a favourable answer, and gave it to her maid to send away; but no sooner had she done this than the thoughts of the former happiness she had proposed to herself returned, and, almost before her maid was downstairs, she called her back, and immediately burnt the letter, and wrote another, in which she begged her suitor "if he had the affection for her he professed, to show it by never again troubling her in that nature."

At this point the author breaks off to describe the person and character of the lady whose hand was thus eagerly sought; he concludes in the following somewhat unexpected manner:

"She was so bigotted to the Protestant religion she was brought up in, that neither the entreaties or promises of her elder brother, Sir John Hanmer, could persuade her to alter it, who at his return out of Portugal was so zealous

for his religion, as often upon his knees with tears he begged her to embrace it ; yet all this could never move her, though she passionately loved him, to a less esteem or affection for her own religion, which nothing but the hopes she had of being Religious could ever make her think of quitting."

Now, for the first time, we have mention of Sir John Warner.

"It happened whilst she lived at Branford that the Protector died, whose splendid and magnificent funeral invited all people to a sight of it, and her among the rest ; and Providence so ordered that she should be a spectatress with some of her friends in the same balcony, which Sir John Warner, and some of his relations had taken up . . . it being only separated in the middle to divide the two companies. Here she was informed of Sir John Warner, as well as he of her—to wit, that she was likely besides the plentiful fortune her father designed for her, to be heiress to three thousand pound a year should her brother die without issue, who was not yet married, and was in possession of Mr. Baker's estate (Wittingham Hall, Suffolk), his uncle by his mother. But both Sir John and she were so far from any thoughts of marriage, that what was told them of each other took no impression."

Before they met again her brother had become engaged to Miss Alston, a cousin of Sir John Warner, and the prospect of Trevor Hanmer succeeding to the Wittingham Hall estates had therefore become remote.

The Protector having died, Sir Thomas hoped he might safely return to Betisfield, a house on his estates in Wales, and with this view asked his daughter to join him and Lady Hanmer in London, where, however, they were detained by the negotiations concerning his son's marriage.

Meanwhile Sir John Warner, who had lately come into possession of his estate through his father's death, had made all arrangements to travel in France, when his aunt (Mrs. Alston) begged him to put off his journey, in order that he might be present at her daughter's marriage, which would take place in a fortnight or three weeks' time. Sir John consented, and while staying thus with his aunt Sir John Hanmer came to see his betrothed, and brought his sister with him.

“Though the first sight of her made no impression at all, yet this second did, and so

forcibly, too, as to make Sir John Warner immediately lay aside his former designs, and resolve to make his applications to her."

The author adds that he would never have had the courage to do this if he had known how severe and averse she had shown herself to former suitors, for these being the first addresses he had ever paid to any woman, he would not willingly have exposed himself to a refusal, having hitherto declined to entertain any thoughts of marriage in those unsettled times.

To the surprise of her friends, and even of herself, Trevor was willing to receive his addresses, and "she who had stood 'out several years' courtships from others was gained in three weeks' time by Sir John, who, the week after his cousin's espousals, was himself married in London by Dr. John Warner, Bishop of Rochester, upon the 7th June, 1659."

After remaining for some months in London, probably with Mrs. Alston, Sir John and Lady Warner resolved to retire to their country house at Parham. Before doing, so, however, they received news of the dangerous illness of Sir John's eldest sister, Ann Warner, who was



living with her stepmother (Lady Ann Pettus) near Norwich. Accordingly, they went thither, and on her death, shortly after, they accompanied her body to Parham, where Sir John had arranged that she should be buried ; and they took with them also Sir John's remaining sister, Elizabeth, then about eighteen years old, who from this time forth made her home with them.

The duties of mistress of a household in the country must have been exceedingly arduous in those days when the care of the servants, both men and women, in great measure devolved on her. The author describes in detail with what fidelity and courage Lady Warner discharged them, reading aloud to her servants while they worked in order that their minds as well as their hands might be employed, and dismissing those who were "addicted to unnecessary and dangerous conversations," and likely to have a bad influence on the others.

"If she found any of her servants overseen in drink, she admonished him the first time to take care she saw him not guilty of the like offence again ; and if this charitable advice

took no effect, she was wont to use her powerful intercession with Sir John (who refused her nothing she desired) to discharge him immediately from his service." Moreover, to prevent the common excuse that their intemperance proceeded from entertaining other gentlemen's servants, she gave orders "that others' servants should be treated as she would have her own : that they should want nothing, yet not have so much as to unfit them to render due service to their masters."

Nor was she less diligent in her care of the poor ; not only preparing cordial waters, syrups, and such-like helps for those who were sick, but carrying them to them herself. On one occasion she went "half a mile on foot to assist a poor neighbour in child-bed, and this even at midnight, in the rigid season of winter, through the snow, by which she saved the woman's life." She would never by any entreaties be induced to play for money, professing she had none to lose but what belonged to the poor, for what she could spare out of the allowance Sir John had given her she had assigned them.

Once only in this narrative of her early married life do we find direct reference to the

theme which otherwise runs through the whole of these memoirs—her desire to be a nun. At the birth of her first child we read : For three days and nights “her life was in great danger,” but she “endeavored to suffer all with what patience she was able ; looking upon it as a just punishment of God for having neglected those good purposes she had made of dedicating herself to His service ; and therefore resolved if God spared hers and the child’s life, to bring it up with the same sentiments God had given her of that state she ‘had’ now made herself incapable of ; hoping it might afterwards embrace that happy life she herself had neglected.” We may add that these hopes were fulfilled, both her daughters becoming nuns in the “English Monastery of St. Bennet, at Dunkirk.”

On this occasion Sir Thomas Hanmer made the journey of two hundred miles (from Betisfield in Wales to Parham in Suffolk) on horseback in the depth of winter, in order that he might give his daughter the comfort of his presence, and was with her a month before her child was born, March, 1660.

A second daughter was born in July, 1663, and Sir Thomas then invited Lady Warner, as soon as she should be strong enough to bear the journey, to come with Sir John and her two children to Betisfield, and spend the winter there.

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## PART II.

### The Conversion of Sir John and Lady Warner to the Catholic Faith.

It was during this long visit of six months that Lady Warner and her stepmother engaged in the conversation concerning the Real Presence to which we have referred. Startled to find that her father and stepmother regarded "belief in the Real Presence of our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament" as the doctrine of the Church of England, she silently resolved to take the opportunity of enquiring into the matter as she passed through London on her way home.

No sooner had she arrived in London than her brother came to visit her, and told her that "Uncle Hanmer" was in town, and would be very glad to see her. Lady Warner was at



first somewhat concerned at what "Uncle Hanmer" would think of her having embraced a state of life so contrary to what she had intended ; but "civility overcoming apprehension," she appointed a time for his visit. So far from referring to the past, Father Hanmer congratulated her on her happy marriage, but took the opportunity of speaking to her on the necessity of being in the true Church. On a subsequent visit he dwelt especially on the doctrine of the Real Presence, but, though he brought forward more and better arguments than any she had heard, the only result was to quicken her resolve to enquire further into the matter. On both occasions she had received him with so much courtesy that her friend, Miss Joan Kinnaston, who was present at the interviews, was alarmed ; fearing that this good father (whom she knew from my lady to be a priest) had wrought much upon her judgment. My lady, however, assured her "that she had the same belief as ever of the truth of her own religion ; and that her compliance with him was purely out of civility, which she could not but show him, while he expressed his by his kind

visits, and the zeal he evidenced in them for her eternal happiness." Her friend, however, was still uneasy, and begged her to go with her to some Protestant Doctor, who, she said, "would convince her of the falsity of all this priest had told her." My lady the more readily consented, as it gave her the opportunity she sought of satisfying herself concerning the Real Presence, and she only made it a condition that her name should not be known. Miss Kinnaston then took her to Dr. Buck, Chaplain in Ordinary to Charles II., telling him: This friend of hers, who had no mind to be known, came to him to be satisfied in some doubts of religion. The biographer then gives an account of the interview in Lady Warner's own words, as she wrote it down for Sir John before he himself went for instruction to Dr. Buck.

"Being first acquainted with the end of our coming, the Doctor desired me to propose my difficulties; I asked him what was the Protestant opinion concerning the Sacrament? He told me that the body of our Saviour was really there; and that it was eaten by us with our teeth. I asked him about praying to Saints? He told me 'twas a thing indifferent. I asked

him about Purgatory? He said it was an opinion grounded upon reason, and that he was not much against it. I asked him about Confession? He told me 'twas a necessary and useful thing, and that it had ever been practised in the Protestant Church, and that he himself had heard Confessions all along the troublesome times. I asked him about merit? He told me 'twas as the Roman Catholic Church had defined it, but that Protestants durst not use the word, for fear of offending the common people, though their meaning was the same with the Catholics. He told me he agreed to all that the Catholic Church had decreed, and that what they had not determined he meddled not with. He offered to bring me to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Sheldon, to be assured that this was not his own opinion or particular belief, but that the whole Protestant Church believed the same. He said there was no difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England, but what might easily be reconciled, and that there was no dispute about fundamental points of faith; affirming that he had lately discoursed with His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury about these points with the same freedom he had done with me, and that the Bishop told him: 'Doctor, I am of your opinion.'"

My lady was surprised to hear the opinions

so often railed at by those of her own Church, now in a manner owned by a Doctor of the same, and even, as Dr. Buck affirmed, by the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, and afterwards declared: "That this discourse of his wrought more upon her than all she could have heard from Catholics could ever have done; and she was above measure troubled to see herself so ignorant at that age, in points of religion of so great moment."

My lady now sent to beg of Father Hanmer the favour of a third visit, and when he came she told him the result of her conference with Dr. Buck, viz.: "That her belief of which was the true religion was wavering and unsettled, and that she was so restless and disquieted thereby that she feared whether or no she was of any religion at all, and that if she died in this doubting condition she knew not what would become of her." Moreover, that she was leaving town the next day, and thus would be unable to confer with him any more, and she begged of him to continue his kindness to her in sending some friend of his to her house at Parham, to whom she might propose her difficulties. The

Father promised to do so, and a fortnight later Father Travers, S.J., arrived with a letter of introduction, and was received with great kindness by Sir John and Lady Warner, though the former was at this time ignorant of what had passed in London, and attributed his wife's sadness to her parting from her father ; he knew only that this gentleman was a friend of her Uncle Hanmer, who, as she had told him, had visited her more than once in London. After several conversations with Father Travers, Lady Warner was convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, and resolved forthwith to embrace it, but first would tell Sir John. "Wherefore one night when they were alone together she told him she had a request to beg of him, which, for the passion of our Saviour, she desired him not to deny her. He replied that he wondered she should by so earnest a solicitation express a fear of his refusal, who had never yet denied her anything she had asked . . . and she could not but know it was as great a satisfaction to him to grant her request, as it could be to her to obtain what she asked. Upon this she desired him 'to give



her leave to save her soul.' He told her he was now more struck at the request itself than before at the manner of making it, because she could not think he would deny her leave to save her soul, it being as dear to him as his own. In fine, she begged his leave to reconcile herself to the Roman Catholic Church, adding that "though she knew his consent would be a prejudice to him, both in his estate and reputation, yet she could not but believe that the love she had ever experienced from him, and the necessity of a grant of what she desired to her obtaining Heaven, would move him to sacrifice both."

Sir John, knowing her zeal for the Protestant religion, and how far she was from fickleness or inconstancy in anything, enquired how she came to make this unexpected request, and she then told him all that had passed in London, and how this friend whom Uncle Hanmer had sent had convinced her of the necessity of joining the Catholic Church.

Sir John desired her "not to be too rash in her resolutions," and then added: "How uncomfortable a thing it would be for them to be of

different religions, that he had a soul to save as well as she, and that no temporal interest or loss of reputation should hinder him from doing what was necessary to obtain salvation : that he was troubled no less than herself at what she had related, and assured her that he would not rest satisfied till he was thoroughly convinced which of the two religions was the truest: and that perhaps after a diligent enquiry he might be of the same mind with her, and that 'twould be most comfortable to both to embrace the same religion together." However, he believed Father Travers would not be able to answer the difficulties he would propose to him, and in that case she would have the less reason to acquiesce in his arguments. Lastly, he asked her for his sake to defer, for some time at least, her change of religion ; however, if she thought these reasons insufficient to move her to do what he desired, he left her entirely at liberty to do what she thought best. Upon this she resolved to put off her reconciliation till another time.

The next morning, Sir John not doubting that the difficulties he had to propose were

unanswerable, accosted Father Travers, who skilfully evaded all questions of controversy. Sir John thereupon told him "he wondered he showed not the same zeal for his soul that he had expressed for his wife's, and did not give him the same satisfaction in his doubts that he had given to her." The Father perceiving that my lady had told Sir John all that had passed, desired him to propose his difficulties, which he had no sooner done than Father Travers easily and clearly answered them. Among other things, Sir John asked him "what rational grounds there could be for a belief in Purgatory?" Father Travers explained them, showing the difference between the punishment and the offence of guilt by the example of David, who after the pardon of his transgression had the punishment of it inflicted on him by the death of his child, and how God's infinite goodness and mercy would not permit Him to damn a soul for one small offence, nor His justice suffer anything defiled to enter Heaven; and therefore to purify such a soul and render it fit for Heaven there must be either a voluntary penance undergone in this life, or an involuntary

punishment to be suffered in the next. He also showed the difference between a penance freely and willingly undertaken in this world and a punishment "suffered by force" in Purgatory ; and how much more acceptable the one must needs be to God than the other.

Sir John then observed that were he once convinced of the existence of Purgatory, "he would use the best means he could to avoid it, and he knew of none better than to betake himself to a Religious course of life, the Roman Catholic Church affording this means of avoiding it, having many Religious houses . . . . which happiness his own religion wanted."

Father Travers was not prepared for this result of his discourse, and, though at first he had been backward in engaging in any religious discussion, he now "seemed very active in discouraging Sir John from such an undertaking." He told him "this was not necessary to salvation as the becoming a Roman Catholic was ; that marriage was a state both pleasing to, and ordained by, Almighty God, and that he could not enter upon such a course of life unless

his lady did so too, and therefore he ought to lay aside those thoughts, and set about what was of greater moment, viz., the disposing himself to become a member of the Roman Catholic Church." He urged him to lay aside all interest and the prejudice which his education and long practice of the religion he professed had given him, and to pray with earnestness and confidence that God would show him "the secure way to salvation."

Sir John told him he would follow his advice, but, the matter being of so great weight, he would first consult those of his own religion, and begged him to give him briefly, in writing, the chief points in which Catholics differed from those of the religion he professed.

Father Travers then left Parham, promising to return soon with the paper Sir John had asked for. The very day he set out, Sir John began to put in practice his advice, retiring to his room for prayer and meditation. During these pious exercises two thoughts came frequently into his mind—the fear of death and judgment, and the fear lest his lady should die before him, which he could never



contemplate without extreme sorrow. In this perplexity the same thought which had come into his mind, when Father Travers discoursed on Purgatory, returned, and brought with it much consolation—a Religious life, both offering itself as a means to disarm death and judgment of their terrors, and also as the best way to prepare (by a voluntary separation beforehand for the love of God) for the necessary separation which death would one day make between him and his lady.

He was so carried away with these thoughts that he was unable to reflect upon the change of his religion, though so necessary a qualification to the state of life he desired; and he could not rest till he had consulted his lady, since, unless she still had the same inclinations that he knew she had before marriage, it would be vain for him to entertain such thoughts longer.

Lady Warner received this intimation with a flood of tears, and Sir John, seeing her thus moved, “begged of her, for the love of God, not to trouble herself further about what he had proposed, for, unless she was of the same mind,

he neither could, nor would, harbour these thoughts any more."

"She replied that her tears were not tears of sorrow but of joy; that the value she had before marriage for the Religious state was not at all lessened by it, and that she still esteemed a monastical life the happiest in the world, but had endeavoured to put such thoughts out of her mind as she was able . . . and durst never signify her mind to him in this matter, fearing he might take it unkindly." She added, that a Religious life, happy as it was, required such a disposition as neither of them yet had, viz., the being members of the Roman Catholic Church.

Sir John retired again to his room, where his anxiety increased, and at last (finding the time long, though it was but ten days since Father Travers left Parham), he resolved to go himself to fetch the paper which had been promised him. He found Father Travers ready to set out, and prevailed on him not to change his kind design, but return with him to Parham.

After Father Travers had read the articles over to Sir John and his wife and sister, the

two last were thoroughly convinced, and took the opportunity of his presence to be received into the Catholic Church, on the eve of St. John the Baptist's day (June 23rd), 1664, and received Holy Communion on the following day. But Sir John desired to hear what those of his own Church could answer.

Having obtained permission to show the treatise to some learned men of the Protestant Church, he made a journey to London expressly for that purpose, and arranged with Father Travers to meet him there, that they might confer together concerning the objections raised.

He applied first to Dr. Buck, whom he did not know personally, though he had been chaplain to his grandfather and had baptized him as an infant. He found Dr. Buck "so civil as freely to discourse with him, without asking him who he was."

He "read over the whole treatise with Sir John, and made no objection, either against the Real Presence, Prayer to Saints, Purgatory, Confession, or Satisfaction for sins. But when he came to that point that there was no true

ordination or priesthood in the Protestant Church (for a proof whereof was alleged what Dr. Thorndike in his 'Weights and Measures' wished, 'That since there was great doubt in so essential a point they would submit to a re-ordination by the Suffragan Bishops of Rome") the Doctor was so moved that he declared 'the author of that pamphlet deserved a severe punishment.' And when Sir John endeavoured to pacify him, telling him 'his citation was out of a Protestant author, and therefore, unless false, was not so much to be blamed,' yet the Doctor could not be persuaded to read any further."

Sir John then asked him whether, seeing there was a doubt in the Protestant Church on so important a point as true ordination, "there would be any danger to his salvation if, for this reason, as well as for the advantage of Religious houses . . . . (finding himself most particularly moved to a Religious state of life), he should quit the religion he had been brought up in and become a member of the Roman Catholic Church. The Doctor expressed his concern at the want of Religious houses in the Church of England, but would not own a want of ordination

. . . . and earnestly begged Sir John to continue in the Church he was in, assuring him : “ that in a short time they would both be united : the chief difference betwixt them consisting in the Pope’s usurping a power beyond what Christ had given him : their Church allowing him to be the first, but not supreme, Bishop, which question he believed would soon be decided by a condescension on both sides.’ ”

Sir John was not satisfied, and resolved to go to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Arrived at Lambeth, the Archbishop (Dr. Sheldon), not so courteous as the King’s Chaplain, would not give him audience until he sent in his name. Sir John therefore gave his name merely, concealing his rank. The questions which he had prepared beforehand were three : 1st, Whether there were a Church established by Christ, out of which there was no salvation? 2nd, Whether the Roman Catholic Church were a member of this? 3rd, Whether there was salvation in the Roman Catholic Church?

To the first question my lord answered affirmatively ; to the second he said, “ It was a



corrupted member." Sir John then asked, "If it erred in any fundamental point?" He answered, "It did not, for then it would be no Church." From these premises Sir John drew the answer to his third question, telling my lord that it evidently followed there was salvation in the Roman Catholic Church. But my lord answered that while it might be so for those who were born and bred up in that Church, for him, who owned himself to have been brought up a Protestant, it was very doubtful, it being dangerous to leave a pure Church and enter one defiled with errors.

Sir John humbly submitted, that since they did not err in fundamental points it could not be so very dangerous. My lord replied that he was not so competent a judge of this as himself, and therefore was to rely on his opinion rather than his own. Sir John submitted his judgment to my lord's on this point, but having understood from Dr. Buck that the Archbishop had a great esteem for the Monastic State, he put the same question to him that he had put to the Doctor: Whether the desire to embrace a Religious State might not be a sufficient

motive for becoming a Catholic? Instead of answering, his Grace asked if he were married; and having learned that he was, told him the question he had asked was a vain one, because the state he was in rendered the other incompatible. Sir John humbly conceived that a mutual consent gave the same privilege to embrace that state that a single life did. My lord again asked if he had any children; he told him "Yes"; then "You are in conscience obliged to see them educated." Sir John replied that by leaving them to a trusty friend, with security of a sufficient maintenance, he thought he better satisfied his obligation than by educating them himself, with hazard of his own salvation.

At this point my lord was interrupted by a young relative, about ten years old, who was going to Westminster School, and remained so long talking to the boy, asking after his friends and what books he was reading, that Sir John, who was sitting by, came to the conclusion that the danger of becoming a Catholic was not so great as my lord affirmed, otherwise he would have thought his time

better spent in satisfying him in a business of such moment.

The Archbishop, perhaps not unwilling to break off the discourse, told him, "That since his weighty affairs afforded him not so much time as the answering of his doubts required, he would recommend him to one who should make it his business to do so"—and he ordered one of his gentlemen-in-waiting to accompany him to Dr. Dolbin "(then Dean of Westminster, and afterwards Bishop of Rochester, and, last of all, of York)."

As Sir John was going out of the Palace he met his neighbour and friend,\* Dr. Sancroft, coming in, who greeted him, and probably afterwards informed the Archbishop of his rank. For, at the water-side, Sir John, meeting Dr. Dolbin just landed at Lambeth Stairs, desired my lord's messenger not to speak to him, but to turn back and follow the Doctor to my lord, whom he found much more civil and obliging than before. After the Archbishop had talked nearly a quarter-of-an-hour with the Dean, they

\*The author says "now Archbishop of Canterbury," *i.e.*, when the memoir was written.

both came to Sir John, and my lord assured him he had thoroughly informed the Doctor of his difficulties, and he was ready, whenever he pleased, to give him satisfaction in them. The Dean assured him of the same, and, at Sir John's request, promised to see him at his house the following day.

Sir John, however, soon perceived, from the manner in which Dr. Dolbin answered his questions, that he was not likely to receive a satisfactory solution of his difficulties, and he therefore made few or no objections to what the Doctor said, thinking it better to go quietly away, as if satisfied, rather than offend both the Archbishop and the Dean, and perhaps cause them to divulge what few knew of—his doubts concerning the Protestant religion.

Nor was the Dean much bent on discussing such matters, "but took occasion to ask many curious questions," among others, what was the name of his lady before marriage? and on being told, he asked what relation she was to Sir John Hanmer, "a particular friend of his"? On learning that she was his sister, the Dean made greater professions and offers of service

than before . . . He ended by saying, as Dr. Buck had done, "That 'twas a mere punctilio the Pope stood upon that hindered the union of both Churches, which he hoped to live to see decided, and assured him that whenever any other difficulties occur'd, he should find him at all times ready to answer them."

Sir John humbly thanked him, and "took his leave, resolving now to embrace (as the securest way) that religion in which both allowed salvation, rather than remain in one where the contrary church (which the Archbishop had owned to be a true one) denied that any could be saved."

As soon as he had made this resolution, he began to feel some quiet in his soul, which from his first doubt of the truth of his religion had been continually on the rack. This had so influenced his health that he feared he was on the verge of some serious illness, and having mentioned his indisposition to Lady Warner by letter, she concluded he might be worse than he had been willing to tell her, and hastened to London on horseback. She, however, felt herself well repaid for the fatigue of her



journey by being present at her husband's reception into the Catholic Church, which he had arranged with Father Travers should take place on the morning after her arrival, July 6th, 1664.

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### PART III.

#### Lady Warner's First Novitiate (at Liège).

IN tracing the line of thought which led Sir John Warner and his wife to the Catholic Church, we are struck by a curious similarity. Lady Warner, as we have seen, had before her marriage cherished so earnest a wish to be a nun, that for this reason, and for this alone, she was willing to abjure her Protestantism ; while Sir John, during his first conversation with Father Travers on religious subjects, declared, somewhat to the consternation of the Jesuit, that, were he once convinced of the doctrine of Purgatory, he would enter a Religious Order ; and he afterwards put the question both to Dr. Buck and to the Archbishop whether the absence of monasteries in the

Church of England were not a sufficient motive for him to become a Catholic. We might at first be inclined to attribute this deep respect for the Religious life to the influence of his wife, but this could not well have been so, since Lady Warner distinctly states that she had avoided all conversation on the subject since her marriage, fearing he would take it unkindly; while Sir John was evidently in doubt how she would receive his suggestion that they should retire from the world. It seems probable, therefore, though we have no means of assuring ourselves of the fact, that Sir John also, whom we know to have been averse to the idea of marriage before he met Trevor Hanmer, may, in youth, have preferred the Religious life to any other, though his Protestant Faith might well seem to him an insuperable obstacle to entering a monastery.

Being at last free to carry out his purpose, he sent for his brother, Mr. Francis Warner, who was then in London, and told him, that, having no son, he intended to make him his heir, after paying portions to each of his daughters, and that he would make no condition with him

that might sway him to do what he himself was not convinced was for the best ; but only asked in return for this his kindness that he would impartially examine the tenets of both Churches, and embrace that which he should find to be the true one. Francis Warner consented, and for this purpose, as well as to arrange the settlement of the estate, accompanied Sir John to London, where being present, " in pursuit after the truth," at a disputation between Father Travers and Dr. Chamberline (then chaplain to the Duke of Ormonde), he was so convinced of the danger of continuing in his own religion, that he soon after became a Catholic ; whereupon he acknowledged to his brother that he was " more obliged to him for the manner of giving him the estate than for the estate itself " ; for had Sir John, in the first instance, offered it to him upon condition of abandoning the Protestant religion, which then he thought the best, he would rather have refused the estate than forsaken his religion, and consequently would never have enjoyed the unspeakable happiness he now felt, " far exceeding any he

could hope for in the enjoyment of the estate."

Meanwhile, Lady Warner, at Parham, prepared everything for the journey, so that, on the return of Sir John, they were able to set out at once.

They left Parham on the 20th October, 1664, accompanied by Elizabeth Warner, the two children, and probably a servant, who, however, is not mentioned till later ; and, after a journey of three days, arrived in London, where they remained four days, and were joined by Miss Frances Skelton, a relative of Sir John, who also desired to be a nun, and by Mrs. Fausset, "a woman who knew the Low Countries ; and was accustomed to conduct beyond-sea young gentlewomen that went to monasteries." The incidental mention of this woman, as well as of no less than six convents where the nuns are expressly stated to be *English*, gives some idea of the tenacity with which the people of this country clung to their ancient faith.

The whole party, with the exception of Sir John (who stayed behind privately, in order to prevent any ill consequences that might follow



their departure), left London on the 27th October, and, after two days, arrived at Dover, where, finding the packet-boat ready to sail, they immediately embarked. It was fortunate they did so, for Dr. Edward Warner, one of the King's physicians, and uncle to Sir John, hearing that they had left London, "procured an order from the King and Council to be sent to Dover for the stopping of Sir John and his lady." "This came not to the Mayor's hand till the packet-boat was put off, so all he could do was to return answer that they had gone; believing Mr. Gascoin, a gentleman who met them accidentally at Dover; and went over in the same boat, to be Sir John."

"Dr. Warner, on the supposition that Sir John, with his whole family, was gone beyond-sea, endeavoured to secure the estate, since he could not him, and therefore petitioned the King and Council for a grant of it, upon pretext to keep it out of the Jesuits' hands." . . . The King, who loved not importunities of that kind, endeavoured to put him off with a jest, telling him, "If Sir John had a mind to be one of God Almighty's fools, he must have patience ;

and that if he would let him alone a little, he himself would soon weary of the course he had undertaken." But he, still persisting, the King bade him go to the Attorney-General, and order him in his name to do what the law should direct for the security of the estate.

The author here breaks off, to show how far the Jesuits were from any such design, reminding us how Father Travers had dissuaded Sir John from the undertaking when he first mentioned it to him ; and also inserting the following statement made, in after years, by Sir John :

" Having in his Noviceship a scruple, that he complied not with our Saviour's counsel of *giving all to the poor and following Him* ; unless, after the provision for his children, he gave the residue of his estate to pious uses, especially that part of it that heretofore belonged to an ancient abbey " . . " he consulted his Superior . . . who assured him that no obligation of conscience lay upon him to dispose of it any other way than he had already done, in giving it to his brother, and that under the circumstances it was more prudent for him to do so than otherwise, and that he might as freely entail that part of the estate that had

belonged to an abbey upon his brother as any other land ; it being his ancestors' by purchase, and the Pope having also, by his dispensation (sent into England by Cardinal Pole), made the possession of such revenues lawful even to Catholics, counselling them only to greater liberality in alms-giving, to obtain God's blessing upon their estates."

We shall find this question of the abbey lands recurring later in the course of the narrative.

Sir John resolved to frustrate his uncle's design, which might otherwise involve his brother in a law suit ; but before doing so, hearing that Sir Thomas Hanmer was in town, he wrote, asking leave to visit him. Sir Thomas was overjoyed to find he was still in England, and answered that he "was ready to receive him with open arms, and to embrace him with the same tenderness as ever ; as, indeed he did, his tears at their meeting testifying how great and paternal an affection he still had for him." He, however, used every argument he could think of to induce Sir John to lay aside his design, but finding him fixed in his resolution, he told him : "He would soon have greater cause than himself to repent of

such an enterprise, and, when it would be too late, find the inconveniences to which he had exposed both himself and his wife. However, he would give him no cause to suspect he wanted that kindness for him he had ever professed; and, therefore, though he could have easily crossed his design, he would not do it; and when the Chancellor offered him a decree to take possession of the estate, so long as he and his wife should continue beyond-sea, he absolutely refused it, rather than give him any cause of disquiet or unkind thoughts of him."

Sir Thomas, who was leaving town the next day, being unable to persuade Sir John to return home with him, prevailed on him, at least, to accompany him the first day's journey, as it would probably be the last time he would have the opportunity of enjoying his company. For some reason unknown to us, Sir Thomas, who parted so affectionately from his son-in-law on this occasion, became afterwards embittered against his daughter. "Though he wrote several letters to her, he never gave her the title of child, or subscribed himself her

father, but oftentimes upbraids her for committing an unheard-of ingratitude in taking such a course as this was, without asking his advice or consent."

On his return to London, after parting from Sir Thomas, Sir John, the same night, sought an interview with his uncle. "He went to the nearest tavern to his uncle's house, in Covent Garden, and sent a messenger to let Dr. Warner know that a friend of his desired to speak with him there." When his uncle came, and saw Sir John, whom he believed to be beyond-sea, he was struck dumb, but whether with joy or confusion, the biographer does not say. Sir John, apparently giving him credit for good intentions, thanked him "for the pains and trouble he had taken for the security of the estate (as he thought), though there was no need of it, because he had settled it as firmly as was possible by law upon his brother, who, if he had consulted him, would have shown him the deeds; wherefore, now he was assured of this from his own mouth, he hoped that he would desist from giving himself or his brother any further trouble in this affair."



Dr. Warner promised to do so, and was as good as his word, making no further efforts to get possession of the estate.

To return to my lady, who would now no longer allow herself to be addressed as Madam, but took the name of Clare : she landed with her companions at Dunkirk, October 30th, and went at once to the Convent of the Poor Clares, "with whose poor and rigorous manner of living she was extremely pleased." Thence, on the first opportunity she passed by water to Bruges, and stayed a few hours at the English monastery of Augustinian nuns, where she met Miss Catherine Holland (daughter of Sir John Holland, of Suffolk), who had recently joined the Catholic Church, and taken the habit in that convent. After mutual congratulations on their conversion and religious vocation, Lady Warner continued her journey to Ghent, where she was kindly received by the "English Benedictine Dames." The peaceful countenances and cheerful conversation of the nuns at the various convents she passed, enkindled anew her desire of a Religious life, and she hastened on to the convent she had chosen,

that of the English nuns of the Order of St. Austin, commonly called Sepulchrines, at Liège, where she arrived on 6th November, 1664.\*

Here, however, she was destined to meet with disappointment. The Sepulchrines had, by exact observance of their rule, gained such a reputation that the Prince of Liège had granted them an ample foundation, while, by the assistance of others, they had been able to build for themselves "a very fair and convenient monastery." But this was in no way pleasing to Lady Warner, who sought rather poverty and obscurity, and the very night she arrived, she told the Rev. Mother that she thought "this was not the place that Almighty God had called her out of the world to live in." However, in obedience to her spiritual Father,† she became a postulant, or, in the words of the biographer, "took the scholar's habit," on the Feast of our Lady's Presentation. During her "scholarship" she was occupied partly with solicitude about Sir John, who was still in England, partly with pious thoughts how she

\* The biographer has here September, evidently an oversight.

† Who would seem to have been Father John Manners, S.J.

might adorn the church with pictures and other ornaments which she had left behind in England, and now wrote asking Sir John to bring with him.

On the 10th March, 1665 (the year of the great plague, which, however, did not break out till two months later), Sir John left London and arrived at Watten, in Flanders (on the 20th March), where he took the Novice's habit of the Society of Jesus.

When the news reached Lady Warner, she resolved also to take the habit of her order, together with her sister-in-law, and Miss Frances Skelton. The ceremony of the clothing took place on the 30th April, and the sermon, by a famous Jesuit, Father Martha, proved one of the greatest mortifications that Lady Warner had met with since she left England.

It happened, that not long before, a certain Carmelite Friar had quitted his habit to avoid just punishment, and, having also abandoned his religion, had taken refuge in Holland. To retrieve the honour due to religion, Father Martha extolled above measure the action of Lady Warner, and in the midst of his encomiums

frequently appealed to her to know whether what he said were true, till she was filled with confusion, and "scarce able to continue in the church." On a subsequent occasion, when entering the Order of the Poor Clares, she was privately clothed, "for she would by no means admit of any public ceremony this time, because the confusion she had received at her clothing at Liège was too fresh in her memory."

During her novitiate an incident occurred which caused her great uneasiness.

"There came a person of quality to the town, extremely well attended; the first visit she made, though she professed herself a Protestant, was to the Monastery, where she desired to speak with my Lady Warner, pretending a message to her from Sir Thomas Hanmer, her father. My lady came to her herself, but (finding she brought no letters from Sir Thomas, and that she refused to make any other declaration of herself or quality . . . ) excused her children's coming to her, though she earnestly pressed to see them; fearing there might be a greater design in this visit than only kindness, as the lady pretended." To

prevent this and also to avoid the distraction caused by the children's presence, she privately removed them to the Ursulines, in the same town, and wrote a letter to the Queen Mother of England, placing them under her protection, as she feared there was a design on the part of her Protestant relations to take them from her, either by subtilty or force, and carry them to England.

The Queen, who had always shown kindness to Lady Warner for the sake of her mother, who had been maid of honour, now wrote to the Superior of the Ursulines at Liège :—

“ Colombe, July 17th, 1666.\*

“ Mother,—

“ I have heard with a great deal of satisfaction that the two children of Sir John Warner are at present at the Ursulines, under your tuition. Though I do not doubt but you have all imaginable care of them, yet I cease not to recommend them to you, and desire you not to permit that they be taken from your house without orders from their father or mother, who put them into your hands, or from those whom they shall order to have the care of them in

\* If this date is correct the letter was written only a week before Lady Warner left Liège. Possibly it should be 1665.



their absence ; and if it should happen that any other, by any means, should endeavour to take them away from you without consent of their parents, not to permit it without advertising me first of it. And as I assure myself you will not fail to do as I desire as long as you shall be in that charge, so I make the same request to those that shall succeed you. Wherefore I beseech God to take you into His holy protection.

“ HENRIETTA MARIA.’

It is supposed the news of this letter “ crossed and dashed the design of the person before-mentioned, for soon after she returned to England, yet would never own who she was, nor upon what account she came, more than is before related ; though, during her stay at Liège, she made several visits to my lady.”

It happened from time to time that Lady Warner was called to the grate, many people finding great advantage from her pious conversation ; although cheerfully obeying the Rev. Mother, she failed not to complain to her spiritual father of this hindrance to recollection, and told him she thought she was called to a more strict retreat, where nothing might draw

upon her the praises of others. She begged him at least to give her leave to make a vow never more to go to the grate while she stayed there, and to offer up some devotions to Almighty God to know the Divine will concerning her removal. He showed her the inconveniences that would arise from such a vow, and promised to pray for light to direct her. As it was thought that his absence might moderate her desires for solitude and mortification, he was for a time forbidden to visit her ; but she extremely resented this, the more so as he was blamed for counselling her to do what he had dissuaded her from. She, therefore, importuned the Rev. Mother that he might once more come to her, as his advice was absolutely necessary before she could make a final decision. On his return, he thought he had persuaded her that it was her duty to remain where she was, and be professed, when she told him that her chief motive in this resolution was that she might be no hindrance to Sir John taking his vows, imagining that if the same desires of removal remained after her profession, the Church would give her

leave to enter a stricter Order, which she could do as well a few years hence as now. Upon this he told her that, though the Church could indeed give such permission, yet it would never grant it, on account of several great and general inconveniences, which the good of a particular person, though very great, could never recompense ; wherefore if she ever resolved to quit the Order she was in, she must do it before she made her vows.

The more she considered the matter, the more she was convinced that her design was no illusion, especially as she found that the manner of her conversion and retirement from the world had become known and caused both nuns and others to show her greater esteem.

Having heard that the Carthusian nuns, besides the severity of their rule, were never permitted to receive a visit or letter from any friend, she begged her confessor to endeavour to secure her admission among them, without her rank or position being known ; and understanding, moreover, that none but virgins could hold any office in that Order, she hoped thus to see herself the least and last of a Religious

house. The confessor made known her wishes to the Prior of the Carthusians, who was about to attend a General Chapter of the Order, and who promised to assist her as far as he could ; meanwhile she wrote to Sir John (now Brother Clare), asking leave to enter among the Carthusian Order ; and as this would necessarily delay her profession, she enclosed the following Act of Renunciation, which she hoped would be sufficient to legalize his profession without her making hers.

“ ACT OF RENUNCIATION.

“ I do here, in the sacred presence of Almighty God, offering myself entirely to Him, renounce all right whatever I have to you, and do here solemnly vow perpetual chastity to Him : and do promise you, before God and His Angels, that, with the assistance of His holy grace, I will live and die in Religion ; and will immediately, when I go from hence, put myself under the obedience of another monastery of enclosure : This I again confirm, begging of His Divine Majesty to accept of me, and in sign that I will never revoke it, I subscribe my name.

“ TREVOR WARNER.”

(“ In Religion TERESA CLARE.”)

After receiving this letter, Brother Clare, with the consent of his Superiors, resolved on a personal interview. Arriving at Tongres, four leagues distant from Liège (on 4th June, 1666), where there was a Convent of the Sepulchrines as well as a House of the Jesuit Fathers, he sent a message to her, thinking they could meet more quietly there than at Liège. Instead of coming, Sister Teresa Clare sent her confessor to excuse her, and to beg him to return to Watten, as "his coming to Liège would persuade all people that it was to invite her back to the world; especially when shortly after they saw that she left the monastery, which she designed to do as soon as she had obtained admittance among the Carthusians."

Sir John, acting on the advice of his Superior at Tongres, went to Liège, where the Rector of the College advised him to visit Sister Teresa Clare in the Monastery; but she would not be seen, nor speak with him even at the grate without a companion with her, alleging that this was necessary to prevent the false reports to which she had already referred. Brother Clare was very well satisfied with this,



but at length told her : “ He could never give her his consent to go to the place she had pitched upon, because he could never be assured whether she was content or satisfied in it ; and without that assurance he could neither make his profession, nor permit her to make hers.”

Though this did not wholly satisfy her, the absolute refusal she received from the General Chapter of the Carthusians (which declared that under no circumstances whatever could any but virgins be received into that Order, and that she had been misinformed if she had heard otherwise) caused her to lay aside all thoughts of joining the Carthusian nuns, though she still sought a stricter Order.

Brother Clare, remembering how much she had been pleased with the Poor Clares when she first landed at Dunkirk, and having some acquaintance with a community of that order at Gravelines, no great distance from Watten, suggested that she should go thither. He procured the rules of St. Clare, and desired her, if she liked them (and she would find them rigorous enough), for his own comfort and satisfaction, rather to make choice of that

convent than any other, as he preferred that she should be among nuns of her own nation.\* She was so much pleased with the rules that she at once decided to seek admission, but while this was a great subject of joy to Brother Clare, he was troubled to find that his sister and Miss Skelton were resolved to go with her, fearing lest it might be a prejudice to the monastery they left (where the nuns had been exceedingly kind to them) if three novices should leave at once ; moreover, in the case of his sister he had just ground for opposition in her delicate health, her uncle, the King's physician, having doubted, when she was in the world, whether she could live a year. His efforts to dissuade them were unavailing, and the nuns also seconded their request, so Brother Clare returned to Watten to make arrangements for their journey and reception at Gravelines.

He obtained the Rector of St. Omer's† permission for Mr. Edward Hall (then a secular

\* Lady Warner, having lived in France as a child, does not seem to mind being with foreigners.

† Father Richard Barton.

priest, but afterwards a Jesuit) to conduct the three novices from Liège to Gravelines, and the narrative of the journey, which began July 24th, 1666, is given in Mr. Hall's own words ;

“Sister Teresa all along her journey, and the rest with her, though it was extremely hot, and the religious habits\* incommoded them very much, yet never failed to perform their duties as if they had been in a monastery. She and her companions for the most part sung their office all along the way . . . when she was worst treated she was most content, and the difficulties of her journey seemed a pleasure to her . . . Coming to Sickam, a place of great devotion to our Lady . . . she . . . would go to the church, even before she took any refreshment, where, to my wonder and shame (not being able to follow her example) she kneeled two full hours.” Her spiritual discourse “lasted all along our journey, except only when she sung the Divine Office, or read a spiritual book ; for she had an excellent French book with her, which she turned into so good English . . . that I verily thought it had been in that language . . . till accidentally taking it up to read, to my astonishment, I found it French.”

\* They had obtained leave to travel in their habits.

At St. Omer's she was met by Father Michael Kinsman, who had come from Watten to conduct her to Gravelines, where he was at that time director and extraordinary confessor. Here the three novices received the Bishop's blessing and permission to enter the Convent at Gravelines, and then passed on to Watten, where they dined (Brother Clare absenting himself, as he had agreed with Sister Teresa to do), and arrived at Gravelines between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, on the 3rd of August. As they had arrived so late, the ceremony of their clothing was deferred till the next day, when they were privately clothed, Sister Teresa now taking the name of "Clare of Jesus."

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## PART IV.

### Lady Warner's Novitiate & Profession among the Poor Clares at Gravelines.

NOT many days after Lady Warner had entered upon her second novitiate, the plague broke out at Gravelines, but this "was no manner of discouragement to her, for she still maintained the same evenness of temper, and all her actions were done with the same vigour and diligence as before." Lest, however, Sir John should be anxious, she obtained leave to write to him :—

" Dear Brother Clare,—

" It is by obedience that I write to assure you of all our healths. I beseech you join with us in thanking Almighty God for His wonderful preservation of us. I have not received by



change of habit, or anything else, the least cold or distemper : God can strengthen when and where He pleases. I desire you for His sake not to let that charitable concernment you have for me cause the least trouble, since I assure you that as to health I was never better, and, for contentment of mind, I now enjoy that, by God's great mercy, which I was never acquainted with before in my whole life. The least fear of the sickness never yet seized me. However, pray for me, that I may be well prepared to receive it, and then it shall be most welcome to me : but here are too many great servants of God to fear any danger among them, against which they make so many good prayers. I need not tell you that I pray for you, since you have obliged me to do it by obedience, and I engage you to do it for me by charity, by the practice of which two virtues, I hope we shall one day meet where we shall never any more part.

“Your unworthy sister in Christ,

“CLARE OF JESUS.

“From Gravelines, August 12th, 1666.”

For eight months Lady Warner continued her peaceful life in preparation for her Profession, which had been fixed to take place simultaneously with that of Sir John in the following August, when an event occurred

which was doubly a source of grief to them, depriving them of a near relation and necessitating the postponement of their vows. Early in the year 1667, Mr. Francis Warner came over to visit his brother, who was at Liège, having been sent thither by his Superiors, but whether with the view to look after the education of his children, or for some other reason, does not appear.

On his way thither, Francis Warner visited several monasteries, and among others that of the English Carthusians, at Newport, where "the admirable order and cheerfulness he beheld amongst them, amidst so great solitude and austerity," touched his heart, and he "resolved to follow his brother's example in quitting the world, as soon as he could compass it by a settlement of his affairs in England.

"He said nothing of this design, however, till one night at Liège, when he and his brother were alone together, 'he asked to borrow his square cap, which, pulling off his periwig, he put on, asking his brother if it became him?' who answered 'that it became him very well, and that he did not doubt but if God gave him inclinations to a Religious State that he would

find the same happiness and satisfaction in it as he himself had done.' Francis hereupon replied, with tears, 'that he was sorry he had not profited by his education at school, since, by reason of this neglect he could not now be so happy as to be his brother also in religion ; but added that he had made a resolution of becoming a Carthusian, in which Order literature was not so absolutely necessary as in the Society of Jesus.'"

Brother Clare was overjoyed at this welcome though unexpected news, and as his brother intended to leave Liège immediately, he asked him to conduct his two children, who were still with the Ursulines, as far as Ghent, and leave them with the English Benedictine Dames. This he did with great care, and then passed on to Gravelines, to visit his sisters and give them news of the children's welfare. The biographer tells us "the joy his presence gave them was nothing in comparison of that of the welcome news of his design of leaving the world." Thence he went to Watten, where he made a retreat of eight days, and being now thoroughly convinced that he was called to be a Carthusian, he hastened to Newport once more to take a

view of the place in which he resolved to end his days. "He stayed here longer than he had intended, in expectation of fine weather, but it continued stormy so very long, that his impatience of compassing the happy state he aimed at, caused him to urge the master of the packet-boat to venture out to sea. . . . The master, overcome by his entreaties and large promises, hoisted sail, but instead of steering out of the harbour fell foul of a sand-bank, where the vessel stuck so fast that the flowing tide quickly filled it with water, and boisterous waves washed those over-deck who came up to save their lives. Amongst these was Mr. Warner, who, as the waves carried him out to sea, cried out to those who to save themselves were got upon the shrouds, conjuring them, if they escaped, to let the Carthusians know the manner of his death, and how earnestly he desired they would pray for the repose of his soul." A few who escaped after the tide had fallen so low as to permit them, made known this request to the Carthusians, who not only offered up prayers for his soul, but made an earnest search for his body, describing the

rings which they had observed on his fingers while he stayed with them. These rings being brought by a seaman to a goldsmith to be sold, the goldsmith recognised them, and told the seaman that if he would discover where the body had been placed, he would procure him a reward not inferior to the value of the rings. The man undertaking to do this, he sent him to the Procurator of the Carthusians, who went with him to the shore, where he uncovered the body he had buried in the sand. The Carthusians knew it to be Mr. Warner's by its wanting the fingers the seaman had cut off, not being able otherwise to get off the rings. So they buried him in their own cemetery, "he having plainly declared himself a Carthusian in desire."

Sir John was now obliged to resume his title, together with his estate, and return to England till he could settle it anew upon his remaining brother, Edmund, a merchant in London.

"Being come to London . . . his steward (to whom he had given notice of his arrival) sent an express to inform him that he himself was



put in prison, that his house had been searched by order of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, that they had taken away all the arms they found, and had set a guard upon it."

This happened at a time when the Dutch had appeared off the coast of Suffolk (about seven miles from his house) threatening to land. "Whereupon some malicious persons gave out that he was privately come to England, and lay hid in his own house, with a great many more Papists he had brought along with him, to join the Dutch."

Sir John (whose family as well as himself had always been loyal sufferers for the King) was more concerned to be accused of treason and rebellion than he could have been for any other accusation, and went at once to a friend of his, a Major of the King's Guards, desiring him to acquaint his Majesty with what had passed. The Major thought better to go with him to Lady Suffolk and tell her what had been done by her husband's order, assuring her that the King would not be well pleased should he hear of it. My lady wrote a letter to her husband asking him to make what amends he could to

Sir John, who immediately "took post, and delivered it the next morning to my lord." The Earl then gave Sir John an order for the release of his steward, the discharge of the guard, and the restitution of his arms, and assured him, moreover, that the former orders had been given rather "to secure his house from the rabble that threatened to pull it down," than from any doubt of his loyalty.

Most of the informers and ring-leaders living at Framlingham, a mile beyond his house, he chose first to go thither, lest the news of his return to his house might give a second alarm and create new troubles.

"Upon his way he met several gentlemen of his acquaintance, who accompanied him to the town aforesaid, where he was no sooner entered but the chief inhabitants came to congratulate his arrival: expressing their sorrow for what had happened in his absence, and desiring him not to believe any of them the cause of it; and, moreover, manifesting their joy for his return by ringing of the bells."

Sir John returned to London to make a settlement of the estate. Here he once more

met his father-in-law, and explained to him that instead of the six thousand pounds which by the articles of marriage he was bound to give his daughters, he proposed to settle on them the Manor of Boyton, of considerably greater value. Sir Thomas, instead of taking kindly this great addition to his grand-children's portions, told him that he "looked upon these lands as next to nothing, because they were abbey lands, which never thrive with their owners"; and that he easily perceived Sir John's design in giving these lands to his daughters, viz., "that out of a scruple of possessing them, they should be in a manner forced to make themselves nuns, that they might restore them to the Roman Catholic Church." Sir John wondered that Sir Thomas, being a Protestant, should have such a scruple, and told him the answer he had received from the Master of the Novices; but, Sir Thomas not being satisfied, he gave orders that the money should be raised on other lands for the payment of his daughter's portions.

Whilst thus busied in getting the writings engrossed, he received a letter from the Rector

of Watten\* asking him to take no further steps with regard to the settlement till he should hear from him again, as Sister Clare had become dissatisfied with the convent where she now was, desiring to enter a stricter order, and where she would be among foreigners, from whom she would not receive so much consideration as from the English nuns. Father Thomas Worsley (who had been for some time her director) had gone to Gravelines to try to remove her difficulties, but the Rector feared it might end in her returning to the world.

Sir John, upon this wrote a letter to Sister Clare, which he desired the Abbess to give sealed into her own hands, and that she might have the same liberty of transmitting her answer, without showing it to any one.

In this letter he told her "that if these trials she had made of a religious state gave her an occasion to repent of her undertaking it was better sooner than later to declare her mind, before he made any further settlement of the estate, and that he was confident she could not be so far ignorant of his affection as to think

\* Father Martin Green.

that, to make himself happy, he would expose her to so great a misery as the entering into that state against her will would occasion ; and therefore, as he had left the world purely in obedience to what he thought God's call, and not out of any want of that reciprocal affection he was obliged to have for her, so unless she had the same content in this state as he had found, he should not look upon it as a real call from God, but as a trial only that Almighty God had given him of his obedience . . . and therefore desired her freely to discover her mind to him, assuring her whatever it was it should not in the least lessen that constant affection she had ever received from him."

This letter did not reach Lady Warner till she had taken the resolution to remain and make her profession at Gravelines. She therefore wrote at once to Sir John to put him out of anxiety.

"Dear Brother,—

" . . . I received your letter and read it with that liberty you desired, and now answer you with the same freedom ; wherefore I beseech you be assured that all I shall say comes from



my heart, as speaking in the presence of God, and without consideration of any creature. And first as to myself . . . I do assure you by God's great mercy, I desire nothing in this world but to make my Profession in this Blessed Order and House, and that without the least motive arising from you, or anything imaginable but God's holy will. . . . Now, as to temporal business, I do not only from the bottom of my soul resign all right to what you of your charity have given me, but to all other rights and titles whatever (except the portion for this House agreed on at parting), and I bless God a million times Who gives me grace and leave to do it. If I had as many worlds it would be (as I hope) my first act to leave them. I was not worthy to have been favoured by God with great things, to have given them back again to Him, but in giving you to my dear Saviour . . . I must needs say that I present him more than riches can comprehend. And if I would have begged of God to have given me one of whom I might have made a most perfect sacrifice, and in whom I only and purely lived by chaste and passionate affection, it must have been yourself. Therefore all blessing, and honour, and praise, be to His Divine Majesty . . . whom I most humbly beseech to give us His holy grace, so to think on Him now that we may think it an injury to our oblation

to have any thought of one another hereafter, but in Him, and in order to His honour and glory. . . .

“Your most unworthy sister in our dearest Saviour,

“CLARE OF JESUS.”

Sir John now renewed his orders for finishing with all speed the settlement of the estate, but an unexpected difficulty arose in the death of the Abbess\* ; for Mr. Edmund Warner, finding it inconvenient to raise at once so large a sum as two thousand pounds (the portions of Lady Warner and her sister-in-law), desired that the community would be content to receive the one-half at present and security for the remainder, and for this the abbess' consent was required.

The biographer describes the calmness and fortitude shown by Sister Clare at the death of her dear friend, the abbess :

“A nun came with great haste to her cell to tell her that the abbess was dying, and if she did not come quickly she would never see her alive. Sister Clare, joining her hands, without

\* Mother Louisa Taylor.

the least surprise, made a bow to her,\* and without making such haste as might occasion the omission even of the least . . . ceremony of religion, she first put on her great veil, then kissed the ground, and afterwards with a modest and graceful gait followed the religious to the infirmary. . . . She found all the religious bathed in tears, like so many tender-hearted children bemoaning the loss of their dying mother ; yet she who was like to sustain as great a loss as any . . . beheld her ready to leave her without shedding a tear, whilst all the rest seemed to be in very great affliction and general consternation, and so concerned as if all their happiness had depended on this abbess' life." To one of the nuns she said : "Weep not so much, dear Sister, 'tis the will of God you love so well." Not long after this the Mistress of the Novices also died. She had a great esteem for Sister Clare, saying "she had learned more from this novice than ever she had taught the rest," and that she looked upon her "as sent by Heaven rather to perfect her than to be perfected by her." Sister Clare gratefully returned her affection, yet bore her death with the same fortitude as that of the abbess. "Whereby," says the biographer, "she manifested that, though she loved them well, she loved God better ; Whom also she

\* In acknowledgment of the message, as it was their custom not to speak in their cells.

loved in such a manner as to desire rather that He should please Himself than her ; nay, even though He should please Himself in her affliction. Which showed . . . also her disinterested love to her friends, preferring their happiness before her own, and therefore, since their death was a gain to them, she could not regret her own loss by it, nor permit her sorrow to overcome the joy she ought to have in thinking they were happy.”

While Sir John was thus detained in England awaiting the election of the abbess, he received the following letter from Sister Clare with reference to the removal of the children from Ghent to Gravelines. From a subsequent letter to the Abbess of Ghent it is evident that she was afraid Sir Thomas Hanmer would attempt to get possession of the children and bring them up in his own faith, and she thought he would be deterred from doing so if they were with their mother ; probably Sir John had been informed of the danger in a previous letter.

“ Dear Brother,—

“ Having first begged of our Blessed Saviour to direct me concerning the children, I

must tell you my thoughts on all sides, and crave yours concerning what I write, that we might jointly resolve upon what is to be done. I have seriously considered our obligation of bringing them up either for the world or Religion, and I find they cannot possibly learn anything that is material, as to worldly breeding, till they be eleven or twelve years of age; and am therefore apt to think they will be as well here, if not better, for four or five years, than in any place else. I speak in regard of them, and not of myself, I having many apprehensions concerning what I propose. For if they be here, and I should hear they were not well, or they should complain of anything that might happen to them, 'twould be a cause of disturbance, not only to my own soul, but might probably make me troublesome both to my superior and the community, and this perhaps without the least redress to the poor children. Moreover, should they be here, and not speak privately to me (which truly, if they do, will be no small prejudice and distraction to the quiet and advancement of my soul), how should I come to know if they were contented, or if they wanted anything fitting for them, or not? Whereas, if they are in another place, someone whom God should inspire with that charity might take the liberty, at least, to acquaint you or me with it. But yet, on the other side, when I consider the care that our most dear and



reverend Mother Abbess, as well as the rest of this holy family, will undoubtedly have of them, I do not see any cause of this fear. Therefore, what I chiefly apprehend (and propose to you as in the presence of God) is my own disturbance, without any profit to them. I conceive the best way to avoid this, if you think fit to let them come hither, will be to have them here as if I were not here myself, and I shall endeavour to imagine it so, for 'tis impossible that I should have anything to do in their daily concerns with any repose of mind ; yet if anything extraordinary should happen to them I may be consulted here, as I should be were they in another place.

“I think if they come hither 'tis necessary that they should have a good careful servant, and I am sure you will be very circumspect in choosing such a one. I hope the Widow Draper, if you can prevail with her to leave her family, might prove a fit one for them.

“I have no such design, nor ever had, as your letter mentions, that they should wear this habit, as heretofore convictresses (boarders) in this place have done ; for I desire they should wear no religious habit till God clothes them with one.

“As to their portions, I need not recommend them to your care. I hope I may have your answer so soon as that they may be here

before our Profession, if you approve of their coming.

“Your unworthy sister in our Saviour,  
“CLARE OF JESUS.”

Sir John gave his consent, and also at once engaged and sent over the servant Sister Clare had suggested. The Mother Abbess, on learning this decision, sought for a safe means of conveying the children to Gravelines, which was the more difficult as there was then war between France and Spain. The Pastor of Gravelines kindly undertook to fetch them, and Sister Clare sent by him an extremely courteous letter to the Abbess of Ghent,\* thanking her for the care of the children, and explaining her reasons for desiring their removal. “I have writ my father word,” she says, “that ’tis very hard he should desire to take them from me, to put them under the tuition of another, and now I humbly desire your ladyship to assist me in making good this argument by sending the children to me.”

The Lady Abbess received the Pastor with great courtesy, and cheerfully complied with

\* Lady Mary Knatchbull.

Lady Warner's wishes, while the Chaplain to the Convent sent a letter to her, in which he spoke highly of the devotion and sweet behaviour of the children, predicting that they would not only become nuns, but great saints.

The children arrived at Gravelines on the 28th September, and ran to their mother, whom they had not seen for more than a year, "and, with all the hasty joy they were able to express, hung about her neck, often kissing her, and making a thousand innocent expressions of fondness and affection for her," while she, on the contrary, remained unmoved, "thinking it a sacrilege, after the sacrifice she had made of them to God, to give way to her former affections." It is related that one day Madame Flavecœur, the wife of the Governor of Gravelines, was with the nuns in the inclosure, and asked to see Sister Clare and her children, and when they came she was moved to tears at the sight of the children's caresses and the mother's calmness, and said, "O Madame, how is it possible to leave such children? This is a touch of God that strangely surprises me"; while another lady who was with her added

that it was "an act above her sex, nay, even above flesh and blood," and, in her opinion, "rather to be admired than imitated." It would seem, however, that the children understood it, for they remained devotedly attached to their mother as long as she lived.

Their arrival was a test of Sister Clare's obedience, for the abbess, with whose motives every reader will sympathise, at once charged her with the care of her own children, nor would she yield to her entreaties to be assigned some humble office (as that of scullion in the kitchen) in place of the task she so much dreaded; but told her, "when they were old enough to take care of themselves, then she should be employed in such offices as these, but till then she must think that employment most pleasing to God which obedience put upon her."

Sir John (having now at length completed the settlement of the estate), as soon as he had received the news of his daughters' arrival at Gravelines, hastened thither in order to make his profession. Finding that Father Worsley was still at Gravelines, he obtained leave from

the Rector of Watten that he as well as Sister Clare should make an eight days' retreat, and take their vows together. Before this, however, he thought it right to seek one more interview with her, and consulted Father Worsley and the Mother Abbess, "who both thought the proposition not only reasonable but necessary." "The night before their Profession they met at the grate of the choir, which was left open on purpose that they might be assured there were no witnesses of what passed but God and themselves." He asked her whether her resolutions remained unchanged, assuring her that if she had any dislike to the Poor Clares he was as willing to wait another year as he had done the last, and, moreover, if she repented her undertaking, he was no less willing to return with her to the world if she desired it, than he was to come out of it. . . . She thanked him for his generous proposals, and told him "she thought none lived more happily or contentedly in the world than he and she had done, or could love each other better ; yet, what affliction must the reflection upon this happiness occasion, when we consider



how contrary a life and how full of sorrow and affliction that was which our dearest Saviour led here upon earth for our sakes ; and can we love Him and not endeavour to express our loves, by being like Him, in suffering for His sake, as He did for ours ? . . . No, dear Brother Clare, let us never more think of the world. . . .

“ Finding each other so well satisfied in the state of life they had undertaken, they wished one another all comfort in their next day’s sacrifice, and took their last leaves in this world, with hopes of a most joyful meeting in the next.”

The ceremony of their profession is given by the biographer at great length, it being “ out of practice in England ” at that time. “ About nine in the morning of the Feast of All Saints, 1667, Father Worsley said Mass in the church of the Poor Clares, which was crowded with all sorts of persons, including the Governor of Gravelines. The grate of the choir was left open, where Sister Clare knelt in her rank with the other nuns, Brother Clare kneeling within the Communion rails, on the gospel side of the

altar, until he rose to take his vows. The ceremony of his profession consisted in his reciting his vows\* in Latin, kneeling in the middle of the lowest altar step, immediately before receiving Holy Communion. At this time Sister Clare was ordered by the abbess to go close to the grate that she might the better hear and see Brother Clare take his vows; but though she obeyed she kept her eyes cast down as before.

“Mass being ended, Father Worsley went from the altar to the doxal (which is a large open gallery before the choir grate), whither as many of the company as it could contain followed him.” As soon as he had come to the choir, “Sister Clare, with a smiling and composed countenance, kneeled down before the grate, having a crucifix in her right hand

\* The biographer gives the vows, “Englished as follows”:—  
“I, John Clare, make profession, and promise to Almighty God, in the presence of His Virgin Mother, the whole celestial court, all here present, and to you, Rev. Father Thomas Worsley, in lieu of Rev. Father General of the Society of Jesus, and his successors, holding the place of Christ, perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience; and according to it a particular care of teaching children, answerable to the form of living contained in the apostolical letters and constitutions of the Society of Jesus. At Graveling, in the Church of the English Poor Clares, the first day of November, 1667.”

and a lighted wax taper in her left. . . . The ceremony was so moving that there was scarce a religious or secular person present that was able to refrain from tears : nay, the Governor himself, the Marquis de Flavecœur, a person not at all subject to this passion, declared he could not refrain from weeping. . . . She herself was the only person unmoved . . . appearing all the while with a cheerful yet so collected a countenance as if she had been totally absorbed in God, Whose sacrifice she felt that day."

" Her little ones stood by her all the time she performed the ceremony ; which was enough to have moved any heart but hers. For they, being of an age not sensible of their loss, seemed as little concerned as their mother, and were very much pleased at what they understood not, being very busy in assisting at the ceremony : the one put on her veil, the other her crown, at which Sister Clare, smiling, told her in a low voice, she wore that for her Father's sake."

The solemnity being over, she was asked how she had been able to remain so calm and

cheerful amid the tears of so many around her. She answered that this constancy "took its rise from no other source than the Divine goodness, which during the whole ceremony had filled her heart with so great an interior peace and comfort as she had never felt before in her whole life."

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## PART V.

### Lady Warner's Life as a Nun.

ONLY very briefly can we trace Lady Warner's life as a nun. The biographer describes at length the tender care with which she trained her children, who came every day to her for their lessons, while living with their maid, in "The Confessor's Quarter," outside the inclosure; where also Lady Hamilton, a sister of the abbess, who was extremely kind to the little girls, had her rooms. We read also of Lady Warner's faithful observance of the rules, so that even St. Clare could not have kept them better in their primitive fervour and purity; when one of the nuns asked her how she could be so exact, she answered, "How can we be otherwise, when in all things we behold God?" Yet we find her not hesitating



to break the rule of silence in order to console a sister who was suffering. Her unfailing courtesy to everyone is but what we should have looked for from her life in the world ; she “ingeniously dissembled” any trouble or indisposition of her own in time of recreation, and quickly noticed if one of the sisters looked sad, and devoted herself especially to her, endeavouring to cheer her. We have already given many instances of her calmness and self-possession. “The weather, the infirmities of sickness, the death of friends,” she bore with equal serenity.

Probably the severest trial that befel her, as it is certainly the saddest feature in these memoirs, was the conduct of her father.

In a letter which (with the uncertainty in transmission frequent in those days) reached her nearly two months after date, and apparently after her profession, he reproaches her with “breaking the solemn vow of matrimony,” telling her “it is an injury to Heaven to call such follies as these inspirations” ; he conjures her either to return to England, or to live with her husband in some part of France or Flanders,

whither he might come to visit her, otherwise he will never give her his blessing, and he ends with the bare subscription of his name.

In reply, she asks leave to offer him "the sole motives of our so much wondered at resolutions."

"You know, sir, that the state of life I am in is but what God Almighty has been pleased to grant me after a long and earnest pursuit of it, and which, if it had pleased Him to move you to grant me sooner, as He was pleased to move my dear Sir John Warner, not only to consent to but even to propose, might have prevented the unhappy disturbance I have since given you. Those that consider his virtue, and that our affections were wholly grounded on that, will not wonder we should deprive ourselves of those temporal enjoyments we had here, to make one another a present of eternal ones. . . . Certainly, sir, less than a particular and strong impression that the world was not safe for me, had not been sufficient to have made me part with such an husband."

She then suggests that, as he had expressed a wish to see her, he should come to Gravelines.

"You would find these countries (considering

the nearness of the Spaw) very convenient for you ; here being such entertainments, and so good conversations which, if I were not here, might perhaps be an invitation to you." " Oh, sir," she continues, " I wish, since God has thus disposed of me by His infinite mercy, that we had a monastery near you in Wales, for if I am to have any happiness in this world, I wish it might be by your procurement, for then my heart would be at rest that you had forgiven me ; but above all that by so acceptable a work as this you had gained those blessings of Almighty God, which in my prayers I shall never cease to ask, knowing you would then find that true content, which the world has not yet been able to give you . . . . . with all humility, upon my knees, I beg your blessing for myself and my children.

" Your most passionate and affectionate poor child,

" CLARE OF JESUS."

Sir Thomas probably felt this last suggestion—that he should found a house of Poor Clares near Betisfield—to be somewhat impracticable, but the fact that Lady Warner should mention it at all shows the comparative tranquility enjoyed by Catholics, for a brief period, at this time. Neither, would it seem, was Sir Thomas

disposed to visit his daughter at her convent, for he made no answer to this letter.

Sister Clare, who earnestly desired his conversion to the Catholic faith, then asked one of his neighbours, a Catholic gentleman "extremely well versed in controversy," to visit him, and sent by him a second letter. To this, also, Sir Thomas returned no answer, nor do we know the result of the interview.

At the beginning of her illness, when no longer able to take any further care of the children, she once more wrote, at broken intervals, as her strength would permit :

"Sir,—

"My true and passionate desires for your happiness cannot be lessened by any severity of yours, nor can your silence frighten me out of the concern I ought to have for your felicity to my last breath. The daily experience I have of the comfort and happiness that there is in being in the Catholic Church, breaks my heart to think that you are out of it . . . . You would pardon me this presumption I allow myself, if you saw my heart, and tears which almost hinder me from writing this letter ; and I am sure they would move your goodness to a compliance with my request that you would

vouchsafe me a line, which I shall receive on my knees with inexplicable joy, if it please God that I live till it comes. I humbly beg your blessing and my lady's for the children.

“Your unworthy child,

“CLARE OF JESUS.”

Shortly afterwards, a gentleman passing through Gravelines, offered to be the bearer of another letter to Sir Thomas, and she therefore wrote again to the same effect, but at greater length. She begged him to enter into retirement for two or three days “to consider the truth of things,” and added, “If I were dying you would not deny me this, and I know not how far I am from it at present, being very ill of a languishing distemper, which I fear will end in death.” Once more she begged his blessing, and that of her step-mother, and signed herself,

“Your poor sick child,

“CLARE OF JESUS.”

At last, when too ill to write with her own hand, she dictated a few pathetic lines, begging her father, with her “last breath,” to continue his kindness to her after her death in giving his



consent for the children to be brought up where they then were, and, to remind him of his former affection for her, the letter is signed with her maiden name.

She now probably felt she had done all in her power, and when, after her last interview with the children, the abbess asked her if she were troubled on their account, she answered, "No, I bless God, not in the least, for I have long since given them into His hands, Who, I am sure, can and will take care of them."

Beyond one thoughtless act in their early married life, it does not appear that Sir John ever caused her the slightest pain or anxiety, and the only sorrow that befel her in connection with him, arose from an unfounded, though not unnatural, belief that he had died. She had written several letters to him (including some about the children's concerns, which she felt sure he would answer on the first opportunity), and had received no reply. She bore her grief in silence, till one day the abbess asked her if anything troubled her, when she said: "Dear Mother, I believe Brother Clare is dead, which I suppose, out of too much kindness and charity

towards me, you endeavour to conceal from me, knowing how unable I am to bear so great an affliction ; but if God please to have it so, His holy will be done. He Who gave him to me, and now gives me this cross by taking him from me, knows what is best for me . . . .” The abbess tried in vain to reassure her, but the next day there came a packet of letters from Liège, and among them one from Brother Clare, which she carried to her with all speed. Sister Clare received the news with a great deal of joy, but added that the letter came too late for her to read it or hear it read just then, and indeed she never after had the strength to do so.

It appears that Brother Clare had received and answered every one of her letters, but none of his answers had reached her.

With regard to the burning of her picture we cannot share the admiration of her biographer, but it is significant that it happened on the same day that she fell ill of her last sickness, and it would scarcely seem to have been a deliberate act. Not long after their marriage Sir John had commissioned “the renowned

artist, Mr. Cooper," to paint Lady Warner's miniature, which he afterwards caused to be set in gold, with a crystal before it. This miniature he now sent to her, supposing that she would give it to the children. Sister Clare asked leave to dispose of it as she pleased, and the abbess (never doubting that she meant to give it to the children) consented, whereupon Sister Clare dexterously took it out of the case, and on the first opportunity burned it. On the abbess enquiring about it shortly afterwards she told her what she had done ; and in reply to a remonstrance from Sir John, who regretted that she had deprived the children of a treasure they would have so much valued, she said : "He would not have disapproved had he reflected how fit it was that the picture of what she had taken so much pride in should come to no better end than the original deserved."

[That the abbess regretted the act is evident, for after Lady Warner's death she sent for a celebrated artist from Dunkirk, and the body was exposed in the choir for three days in order that he might paint her. This is probably the

portrait prefixed to the memoir, but it was considered by the nuns to be far inferior to that which Mr. Cooper had painted from the life.]

As we have said, the biographer dates Lady Warner's last illness from this time. On the morning of that day she fainted in the choir, and on her return to consciousness the abbess bade her go to the infirmary and rest. A few hours later she went to visit her there and told her how glad she was to find her so well and cheerful. Sister Clare smilingly replied that "she thanked God she found herself ready, and most perfectly resigned to His Holy Will in all things, and therefore had no apprehension at all of death, nay, if she could desire one thing more than another, it would be rather to die than live. The abbess earnestly begged her to lay aside these thoughts, telling her there was no appearance of danger. But she answered with a smile: "Dear Mother, God has now decided a question which I have often thought of with no small trouble, viz., Whether Brother Clare or I should die first? For knowing how great an affliction the death of either would be to the survivor . . . I durst

never beg the one or the other. But now it is God's will that I should go first, and this sickness is to carry me to my grave. I doubt not but His infinite goodness Who designs to give Brother Clare this cross will also give him strength to bear it."

From this time her fever grew more violent, and "finding a body so exhausted and broken it soon got the mastery over nature, and rendered her unable to take any further care or charge of her children." We cannot, indeed, read without regret of her extreme austerities beyond the rules of her Order or the teaching of St. Francis, and which even her biographer terms "a too unreasonable pursuit of self-denial and suffering." "Her love of mortification," writes her confessor to Brother Clare after her death, "would not permit her to rest satisfied with the ordinary austerities of the rule (which were even too great for her delicate and tender complexion to suffer) unless she added others to them, and my refusing her leave to practise the penances she so earnestly desired, I believe, was a greater mortification to her than the penances themselves would have been."



Yet it is impossible not to respect her motive. "Being asked what moved her so to mortify herself? She answered that the love she owed to God made her esteem all she did and suffered as nothing, and rendered all the hardships of her present rules most easy and pleasant." She added "that what is suffered in the strictest Orders is nothing to what many worldlings often suffer, even when in outward appearance they seem most happy."

A few days before her death some of the sisters, in presence of the doctor, were compassionating her weakness, when the doctor remarked that it was no wonder, considering the austerities she had undergone. Sister Clare, hearing this, and fearing he might think her life in religion had been unhappy, called God to witness the following words: "I have so much content and satisfaction at present and always had in this state of life, that I voluntarily took upon myself, as that, were I again as free to choose as ever, I would embrace this very condition of life, and no other." On the day of her death she desired that several candles should be lighted and placed within her

curtains, and a few hours later, with a smiling countenance, declined her head on the abbess' breast, and without a sigh or groan, expired.

On the following day the abbess wrote to Brother Clare :—

“ January 26th, 1670.

“ Honoured dear Brother,—

“ The will of God be ever done . . . . I have taken my pen in hand upon the saddest subject that could have happened to me or this community ; and were I not resolved never to let my will jar with the will of God, I should want resignation to this present visitation, which has deprived us of your and our ever dear sister, Sister Clare of Jesus . . . . in her we lost a great light of virtue . . . . since her generous embracing of our abjections encouraged us in our vocations. I never heard her complain nor repine at our austerities, but I have often heard her say that they were not enough, and that she did nothing as she ought for the love of God . . . . I cannot frame to myself how anyone could have lived more perfectly than she has done these few years that she has been with us . . . . .

“ We are now writing to all the convents as we use to do upon such occasions, to procure prayers for her ; though I believe we want her prayers more than she does ours. I shall daily

beg at her grave that she would obtain comfort for you . . . . As for her two sweet children, if you please to entrust your dear sister [Elizabeth Warner] and me with them, by God's grace, they shall never want a mother, in what lies in my power to serve them. . . . I must confess my weakness in not well bearing so great a cross, and our community is in such a melancholy temper that we are incapable of giving them any comfort upon her death. For this reason I sent for Rev. Father Rector of Watten, who has acted the part of a comforter, both to them and us.

"I keep her beads, reliquary, and profession ring, which she so highly esteemed, for you to dispose of, who I hope this summer will give us a visit, which will be the greatest comfort that your sweet children and this community can receive, especially myself, who am, dear Brother,

"Your obliged and humble servant,

"ANNE BONAVENTURE, Abbess."

"Graveling, January 27th, 1670."

Besides consoling the little girls, Father Williams composed the Latin epitaph which was inscribed on their mother's gravestone.

Although Sir Thomas Hanmer never answered his daughter's letters, he seems to have complied with her wishes respecting the children.

They remained at Gravelines, under the care of the Widow Draper and Lady Hamilton, until the latter having retired to Bruges to take the habit among the Benedictine Dames, Sir John reluctantly dismissed the maid, in order that the little girls might be received within the inclosure. Here, however, they became extremely dissatisfied, probably feeling life among the Poor Clares monotonous, and not being able to go into the town as they had been used to do with Lady Hamilton. The elder wrote to her father (who had now become a priest),\* begging that they might be allowed to go to the Benedictine Convent at Dunkirk, where they had often been kindly received when on a visit. Father Clare was unwilling to remove his children from the nuns who had been so kind to them; he consulted the Father Rector, who once more came to the help of the little girls, telling Father Clare that it was dangerous to disgust the children, who were not yet old enough to understand the happiness of

\* Father Clare was appointed Rector of Watten in 1685, was declared Provincial in 1689, and died at Watten in 1705. (Note to Edition of 1858).

being educated in the Catholic religion, and might find means to procure the help of their Protestant relations, and return to England. The Mother Abbess and Father Clare's sister also interceded for the children, saying they would rather see them happy elsewhere than discontented at Gravelines; so the children were sent to Dunkirk, and eventually took their vows in that convent.\*

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From the Epistle Dedicatory we learn that these memoirs are chiefly compiled from materials collected by the Abbess of Pontoise (Lady Ann Nevil), by whom they were "rather

\* The elder (Dame Agnes Warner) died in 1696, aged thirty-six, having been professed seventeen years. During this time she was nine years together Chantress, the three last being of necessity in order that she might complete the work she had undertaken of having the plain-song printed. Her voice was a great support to the music. She was afterwards elected Sacristan, and much embellished the Church.

The younger (Dame Ignatia Warner), born in 1663, died of cancer in 1711, having been professed twenty-six years. (See Appendix to Edition of 1858).



extorted from the monastery of Gravelines than freely offered," so unwilling were the Poor Clares to transmit to posterity anything in praise of one of their own sisters. The abbess dying before she could prepare the papers for the press, the author undertook to complete the work, and applied to Sir John Warner (then Father Clare) for further particulars, obtaining from him, though not without difficulty, some of his lady's letters. He also obtained from another hand a copy of the narrative of his conversion, which Sir John had written, in obedience to his Spiritual Father, before he withdrew from the world.

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Whatever may be our own religious convictions, we cannot look without admiration upon these devoted men and women, who unhesitatingly renounced all that they possessed to become more perfectly the disciples of Christ.

"O do not suffer alone, but fix me to Your

cross" (is the prayer of Lady Warner before her profession). . . . "Behold with the most intense affection of my soul, I freely and entirely give You myself, my life and liberty, my soul and body—all that I am, have, or can hope for. I give You my dearest husband, children, and whatever is dearest to me, and make this oblation purely for love of You alone."

We read of Sir John Warner that when he determined to leave the world, he had lately built, and furnished at great expense, a beautiful house at Parham, yet he resolved "to return to God whatever He had given, and, what he valued above all His other benefits, his LADY, to whom he thought he could not show a greater mark of his kindness than to forego the greatest comfort and satisfaction he had in this world, for her greater happiness and contentment in the next. Nor did he think it a sufficient compliance with God's call to leave the world . . . if she chanced to die first, because then the living in it would have been a trouble to him, and would be nothing else but to consecrate that to God which He was weary of . . . Besides it was as

probable she might outlive him, as he her, and then it would be out of his power to show any correspondence at all to God's inspiration."

This spirit of sacrifice was shared by many others. We have spoken of Mr. Francis Warner, "a Carthusian by desire," and of Miss Skelton, and Miss Elizabeth Warner, who took the habit of the Poor Clares at the same time as Lady Warner. Of Miss Skelton we hear nothing further, but Sir John's sister took her vows in that convent, and died in 1681, having survived her sister-in-law eleven years. "In my opinion," writes one of the nuns to Father Clare after her death, "she came not at all short of Sister Clare of Jesus, for though she had not those sacrifices to offer to Almighty God as the other had, yet she did as much as lay in her power"; totally sacrificing herself and all she had.

No doubt, similar instances of generous self-devotion could be furnished from the annals of the Religious Orders in every age; but the historian of the reign of Charles II. has hitherto for the most part been occupied with other matters, and "meantime," to quote again the

words of Ruskin,\* “the two ignored powers—the Providence of Heaven and the virtue of men—have ruled, and rule the world, not invisibly; and they are the only powers of which history has ever to tell any profitable truth.”

These two ignored powers are the theme of Lady Warner's biography.

END.

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\* “Bible of Amiens,” p. 20.





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